Tempo

The new generation of strolling players

The team of "actor-teachers," led by Gordon Wiseman (left), who will tour Edinburgh schools from tomorrow, rehearse at the week-end.

A TEAM of actors will set out tomorrow from the Royal Lyceum Theatre to tour Edinburgh's schools. They are a new generation of strolling players. Called actor-teachers, they are employed by the education committee and travel in a van supplied by the Scottish Arts Council. Under the banner of "Theatre in Education," they are taking plays into the classroom—not for the children to sit back and be entertained, but for them to join in the fun and learn something from it.

Their first programme, which will be presented in 40 primary schools this term, is an animated history lesson about the origins of democracy in Edinburgh. Children between the ages of 10 and 12 will be involved in a kind of pageant-play about events in the city 500 years ago, showing how the town council evolved.

Led by the actors, one class will represent the merchants and the other will appear as the craftsmen. Partly scripted and partly improvised, the play will show how elections and debates arose out of squabbles round the Mercat Cross, and how public opinion could influence the king and his nobles.

It may sound like some form of indoctrination, but the young company of actors who have devised the programme will make it entertaining. Their leader, Gordon Wiseman, has had extensive experience of theatre in schools working with the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.

"It's a recognised part of the educational services in Coventry," he said. "The use of drama in schools need not be confined to presenting a play. We don't want an audience—we want to involve the children in the performance.

"In Edinburgh we will start off each programme with an information session explaining the historical background and

By ALLEN WRIGHT

relating it to places and things which the children know. But in time the teachers could do this, and they could devise their own documentaries."

Courses and workshop sessions for teachers will be among the activities of the new group. Their brief is to devise programmes of an educational value which will develop the creative ability of the child; help to promote the use of drama as a teaching method in the classroom; and devise programmes in connection with productions running in the Lyceum."

The scheme has been set up by the Lyceum's director, Clive Perry, in collaboration with Gerard Slevin, drama adviser to Edinburgh Education Department. It is this co-operation between theatre and education authority which makes it unique among the many enterprises of its kind in Scotland. Dundee Repertory Theatre, Perth Theatre and Glasgow Citizens' Theatre (supported by the Duncan Macrae Memorial Fund) have all done much work with children.

Bryan Stanyon, associate director of the Lyceum, who is administering the scheme, says it is the first to employ qualified actor-teachers — Gordon Wiseman, Sue Birtwistle, Andrew Dickson and Win Hunter. He points out that they are not going round the schools simply presenting educational entertainment, but will actually take classes, and then change into costume and attempt to bring the subject to life.

Secondary schools will have lecture-demonstrations on plays that are being produced at the Lyceum. Possibly the first will be Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," which is to be staged this autumn.

Shakespeare no longer has a monopoly of the plays in the school curriculum, and it is hoped to illustrate a number of plays which the children are studying in their English classes.

After the final performance by the Florence Opera at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, on Saturday night, Lord Provost James McKay, of Edinburgh, meets the cast onstage and makes a presentation to Signor Remigio Pavone. In the foreground, left to right are: the Lord Provost, Renata Scotto, Remigio Pavone, and Mr Peter Diamand, director of the Edinburgh Festival.

IAN G. BALL: Radio

Fluent writing in piece for two voices

THE first radio play by Alasdair Gray, broadcast about a year ago, suggested a writer with an acute ear for colloquial speech and the kind of fluency essential to good radio. Dialogue confirmed these impressions and its classic simplicity of form made it a more satisfying play.

There was a brief prologue and a neat coda, but it was essentially a piece for two voices—Leo, a salesman, newly divorced, and Ella, a nurse he has casually encountered. The characters were firmly established by their first speeches, but they were developed with unusual subtlety and irony as the play unfolded.

Bill Henderson and Emma Chapman played Leo and Ella with sympathetic delicacy, and Stewart Conn directed with his customary unostentatious authority. There has been no better production on Scottish radio this year.

Private Prosecution is an occasional series (Radio 4) on the theme of the means of redress of legal injustice available to private citizens. The common theme is unimportant. If last week's **The Case of Michael Harrington** is a fair sample, the series offers court-room drama rather above average standard.

Vincent Brome, who was responsible for script and presentation, set out his material clearly, but (inevitably) the briefly dramatised cross-examinations were irritatingly bitty and the cast of repertory players had difficulty with Italian accents. Nevertheless, the story of one man's fight against official obstructionism had sufficient force to conceal these defects.

Jasper Ridley's radio portrait of **Wellington** tonight (Radio 3) is an entirely routine affair, using actors who read from contemporary source material collected from the reminiscences of Thomas Creevey, Harriette Wilson and others. The familiar points are conventionally made and nobody's heart is in the production.

The new "Radio Times" deserves criticism for its wayward typography and the dishonest small print of its radio programmes. More seriously, there has been so far no space for articles on Scottish radio or Scottish television.

VETERAN OPERA SINGER DIES

Tom Burke, at one time one of Britain's leading operatic tenors, has died in hospital at Carshalton. He was 73.

Born at Leigh, Lancashire, he studied in Britain and Italy. He sang with Melba at Covent Garden in 1919.

Occult and ritualistic images

THE world is magic, the precise darkness of the occult, the ritual associated with Tarot cards and Kabbalah that, by extension, becomes the ritual associated with motor-cycle gangs and the totemic custom-built cars. The films of Kenneth Anger are beautiful, sensual and chilling. They are a challenge, not to conscious responses, but to the half-formed unconscious knowledge of the symbolism of shapes and gods and colours.

"Scorpio Rising" (1964) was his masterpiece (literal sense), the film that established a full reputation. The film is about the boys who ride motor-cycles, about their machines as toys, their machines as part of ritual, their dependence, their passive dependence, on hero-figures, the sexuality and the death that go with their way of life and, more, with the sign of Scorpio itself.

Anger drifts his camera over the externals of the cult, over the details of machines and toys, the almost tangible feel of leather, over the swastika banners hanging high, the brutality of initiation into the cult and, finally, he cuts between a boy who is dead by his machine, and the constant, rotating light on a police car, red for death and blood and end.

Into this observation, sociological in a sense and involving Anger in filming the real rituals of a Brooklyn gang, is cut two sorts of material. One is the hero-image, from Brando to Christ. The other is the heightened, staged observation of detail which moves the film into a form of surrealism which can encompass the mysticism of Anger's approach.

"Scorpio" gets a British certificate at the end of this year, and it should be seen. It reverberates, it frightens.

In "Scorpio," Anger first used material which was not precisely calculated, which was as fleeting as a memory of an incident. His "Eaux d'Artifice" (1953) is a strong contrast. It is a lyric poem, of the fountains and the statuary of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli.

Kenneth Anger, the American film-maker, was in Edinburgh yesterday to present a programme of all his films at the International Film Festival. MICHAEL PYE spoke to him, and here discusses Anger's astonishing vision on the base of how Anger conceived his films.

It is tinted to look like bluey night. Through the falls and spurts of water there runs a small figure—on the example of the Piranese etchings of Rome. Anger used a dwarf to heighten the scale. The music is Vivaldi, "Winter" from "The Four Seasons." The cool evocation of the light and sound of a fabulous garden at night is exquisite.

Magic was implicit even in Anger's first film, "Fireworks" (1947) shot while he was at school with the help of two sailor friends who stole the film from their unit, made in 72 hours while his parents were away from home, and highly praised by Cocteau. Anger manipulates his material, which is brutal enough, not with mere taste, but with inspiration.

Much of his imagery now derives from dream-books he kept while at school. These images, and the interest in the occult, have produced two literally ritualistic films which work as almost sinister experiences. Anger says that children have a contact with the world of the occult. His interest remains because he never closed the door to that world.

In "Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome" (1954-1966), the ritual is played out by occultists who are figures from mythology. Using a fairly limited repertoire of visual effects, superimposition and double printing for the most part, Anger quite literally conjures a world which demands the protecting signs he flashes on to the screen. In "Invocation of My Demon Brother"—the track is by Mick Jagger—he goes farther, making the film not a record of a ritual, but ritual itself.

This interest in the occult is too easily dismissed as a pretentious aestheticism. It is, first, a genuine vision. Second, it corresponds in many ways to Jungian psychology, which may not give the occult intellectual respectability, but does suggest the universality of the images involved. Third, Anger weds it to a style which is precise and beautiful.

He'll mourn the innocence of the days before the Vietnam War, or make a film which stems in part from getting the confidence of motor-cycle gangs, with an interest and an insight into the social implications of those times.

But his main interest is in magic and in the magician. Aleister Crowley, a man he refuses to see as a charlatan, and whom he calls one of Britain's undiscovered geniuses. On Crowley's life, he plans a full-length feature film. It would not be a straight biography, nor simply an evocation of Crowley's almost incredible power over atmosphere, if not the spirits. He has already spent time in Crowley's Scottish house, and at Cefalu.

Anger is a weekend film-maker, making few movies, making them cheaply, feeding his cast but not paying them. He is also an artist, a fine artist, who plays with your mind.

ROBERT MACDONALD: Ballet

Cool and witty Adam and Eve

AFTER dancing beneath the Pyramids on a stage built against the Temple of the Sphinx the Royal Ballet's touring company returned from Egypt to their Covent Garden home recently to prepare for another major excursion — this time to Scotland. The company are dancing in Aberdeen for five days from September 23, at His Majesty's Theatre, before travelling to Glasgow to open a season at the King's Theatre on September 29.

For the third successive year the Dramatic and Lyric Theatres' Association are bringing to Glasgow a mini-arts festival — seven weeks of ballet, drama and opera. The Royal Ballet are presenting 11 different works during their three weeks at the King's, three of which have never been seen in Glasgow before. These last include a new ballet by Geoffrey Cauley—his first professional work — which is entitled "In the Beginning" and tells the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall in "a refreshingly cool and witty style."

The music is a sonata for oboe and clarinet by Poulenc and convention ballet decor has been discarded in favour of a striking set by a painter, Peter Unsworth, who has very successfully adapted his abstract art to the stage, his first venture in this field.

Some of the Royal Ballet's best-known dancers, including Doreen Wells, Elizabeth Anderton and Brenda Last, will be seen in Scotland. One of the principal male dancers is Donald MacLeary, Glasgow-born partner to Svetlana Beriosova, who with Doreen Wells had a great personal success in Egypt.

MacLeary is marking his return to his old home city by taking the leading role of the Prince in the opening production of "The Sleeping Beauty." Then he is due to fly to Vienna to appear with the other half of the Royal Ballet. He replaces the other leading male dancer, David Wall, who is out of action because of an injury.

"We think we are taking a very well-balanced programme to Scotland," John Field, director of the touring company, told me when he talked about the tour in London. "There are some delightful works, like 'The Two Pigeons,' very romantic, with a marvellous gypsy encampment scene."

Mr Field is to take over as co-director of the Royal Ballet next year with Kenneth MacMillan when Sir Frederick Ashton retires from the post of director. He expects to continue to take a special interest in the touring company.

He has been with them since their inception, first as a dancer himself, and he knows the provincial theatres of England and Scotland intimately. "Finding good rehearsal rooms is a major problem for us," he told me. "The theatres can be good but the rehearsal rooms non-existent."

Mr Field took the company to Egypt before the Scottish tour. He doesn't like ballet in the open air normally, but admits the setting was spectacular.

Madame Nasser made a rare public appearance to see them. And as well as packed seats, the ballet found that a giant sand-dune overshadowing the stage was crowded with gatecrashers, "people who just came in from the desert, camels, goats and all."

JOHN CURRIE: Festival Music

Athletic feats in piano technique

IT is probably inevitable that young pianists of outstanding technical ability, like Misha Dichter, spend the early part of their careers dazzling audiences with the bright lights of virtuoso performance. As Saturday morning's recital at the Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh, showed, Mr Dichter can certainly do this. Few pianists could equal his athletic feats in Prokofiev's seventh sonata or in the more gloriously exhibitionistic of Rakhmaninov preludes.

But while one relished the technical pleasures, there were gnawing fears about this pianist's ability to deal sensitively with deeper, more fundamental aspects of the music he had chosen to play. Recent attitudes to Rakhmaninov, for example, are the result of the discovery that his music contains more than the passionate rumblings of a neurotic romantic, and it was a little distressing to hear this young pianist dispensing with some of the greater preludes in a series of shattering fortissimos which rocketed round the marbly acoustics of the hall.

It was irritating, too, to be subjected to Mr Dichter's ideas on how and when to start movements in order to keep the audience on their toes. The general principle seemed to be: surprise them with the first few chords, while more or less joining all movements together to stop the audience relaxing in between.

Earlier in the programme, in both Beethoven's andante in F and in the slow movement of Schubert's sonata in A major (D.664) he frequently caught the shape and mood of the music with an intensity which suggested that he may, after all, have more to offer when the first shock of a prodigious technique wears off.

Exciting clarinet at close quarters

By David Harper

KEITH PEARSON has become fairly well known in his seven or so years as principal clarinet of the SNO. But there is a world of difference between hearing him in that rather remote mid-orchestral role and experiencing his playing at close quarters in the compact chamber music conditions offered at Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh, where his recital on Saturday was both exciting and satisfying.

Partnered by Julian Dawson at the piano, the clarinettist gave a programme of works which displayed his own technical excellence and the instrument's many fine qualities, not the least being its prodigious range of tone and expression—from a cooing croon to a shrill shriek, with many subtler shades between.

Besides conventional touches of classic clarinet writing, two works by Glasgow-born composers—Ian Hamilton's Three Nocturnes, Op. 6, and John Purser's Dances of Ilion, Op. 24—indicated that their writers had not overlooked the high-powered, nimble style of exponents in another field, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw.

The Purser dances had an allegro molto movement for clarinet alone, and the instrument was by itself again in Olivier Messaien's "Abime des Oiseaux," in which the composer has had one of his airy outings under the influence of birdsong.

Rowdies now invade the Prom

Members of the BBC Symphony Orchestra yesterday complained of being "harried by irresponsible elements" in the audience at Saturday night's concert at the Albert Hall, London—the last of the 25th season of Promenade Concerts.

The players said that from a minority of the 6000 audience there were "loud giggles and noises" during the performance. The concert was being recorded and there was no chance of a "retake." Some BBC officials were concerned over the interruptions and said it seemed several people in the audience were determined to spoil the enjoyment of the rest.

The last night got underway amid balloons, streamers, whistles, cat-calls, and several lusty choruses, from the audience.

Millions saw it

Millions of TV viewers — one estimate was 60 million — saw the second half of the programme which featured "Land of Hope and Glory," "Rule Britannia" and "Jerusalem." There had been some speculation before the concert on whether these traditional items would be included.

In his speech to the promenaders at the end of the concert, the conductor Colin Davis, said he wanted to talk about next year's "last night" programme so there would not be any misunderstanding.

He said: "We have asked Malcolm Arnold to write a fantasia for audience and orchestra. This fantasia will include 'Rule Britannia,' 'Land of Hope and Glory' and several other tunes that you will know."

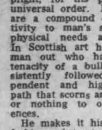
More snags

Mr Davis said he and Sir William Glock, the BBC's Controller of Music, were both keen to get more songs in the "last night" programme, so the audience could play a greater part.

He paid tribute to the hall's manager, Mr Frank Munday, for his work in improving the sound, saying: "This is the first year that we have been able to hear each other on the platform."

The audience joined in the fantasia of British Sea Songs, arranged by Sir Henry Wood. It was the first time for several years that the complete fantasia had been played.

EDWARD CAGE: Art Galleries



Pulsford—aloof, sensitive, tenacious

CHARLES PULSFORD is a rugged intellectual, but he is also a man of great compassion and feeling for man's plight, for his place in the universal order. His paintings are a compound of his sensitivity to man's spiritual and physical needs and hungers. In Scotland, at 38, is an odd man out who has, with the tenacity of a bull-terrier, consistently followed an independent and highly original path that scorns and owes little or nothing to outside influences.

He makes it his business to fashion abstract symbols of great classic dignity that reflect philosophical and mystical concepts which are timeless, and of the kind that find expression in the mythology of Ancient Greece or the beliefs of Christianity.

His expatriate position and his aloof, unconforming nature have, until recently, denied us the frequent opportunity of seeing and estimating his true value or the real extent of his contribution. (He was one of four artists featured at the Carnegie Festival in 1968).

Even now, the Retrospective Exhibition of his work which was mounted in their new buildings by the University of Stirling and has just arrived at the staff dining room of Mackinnon House, Morningside, Edinburgh, is a small affair of 21 pieces, mainly illustrating the work of the 1960s—there are five paintings from the 1950s and only one of each from the previous two decades (one of these, a strange essay in the surreal).

It is then, very far from being the comprehensive affair that the strength and power of his work deserves—in the fullness of time, no doubt, this will receive the attention of the Scottish Arts Council — but it presents a broader view than we saw at Dunfermline.

Pulsford has a grand formal sense, but he is seldom prodigal with it and is often content to suggest a movement or design with only the subtlest of hints and flourishes to inform, contain or direct the eye.

He uses colour emotively and, though his schemes are often almost monochromatic and might look too restrained at close quarters, distance reveals powerful intensities burning beneath the surface, or brilliant transparencies shining through it.

But it is in his preoccupation with rich textures—contrasting massive impastos with tenuous grounds, shiny skins of pigment with aridly stained deserts—that the spirit is made flesh, as it were, for the idea thus becomes a symbol whose sensuous form and substance echoes man's physical being.

Curiously enough, it is possible to see his textures grow in thickness until they approach the density of a bas relief, so that his latest piece —an environmental essay called "'The Temple of Aphrodite,' Polymorphic Image: Painting and Sculpture" — does not entirely surprise us as it would seem the inevitable outcome of the foregoing preoccupation.

Unlike the fashionable, mannered lispings of so many contemporary tongues, Pulsford's voice in the wilderness has something important to say about ourselves and about the true nature and meaning of art.

Roy Marsden, painter, and Ron Hasledon, sculptor, whose work appears currently at the New 57 Gallery, Edinburgh, are both searching for new forms in fashionable vehicles where anonymity is sought after through mechanistic handling procedures — though I notice that Marsden's hard edge is blurred a little here and there, and Hasledon's black, glass fibre bars consistently throw up a romantic gesture that has a Victorian flourish about it.

Marsden is interested in arranging shapes of cotton duck to suggest a sandwiched, modified "Horizon" between symbolically coloured planes of sky and land, and he also assembles a real "Fence" that both encloses and discloses a simple pattern of fields between and beyond it.

Hasledon's pieces create pleasant rhythms that are paradoxically austere and ornate, seemingly functional and purely decorative, so that they seem related in style to furniture of some kind, without actually revealing their practical purpose. In this, they take on a certain surreal quality, an aspect that is further enhanced by their dark and sinister appearance and their sudden reversal of a set pattern.

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